

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please amend paragraph [0014] as follows:**

Further, the vehicle steering apparatus according to a third aspect of the present invention is characterized by comprising an escape stopping ring that ~~contacts~~ is in contact with an end face of said fixing nut from an opposite side of said thrust bearing in the first aspect.

**Please amend paragraph [0046] as follows:**

In the vehicle steering apparatus according to the present invention, in order that the above-mentioned loosening of the fixing nut 82 should be prevented that could arise as time elapses, an escape stopping ring 85 is inserted between the tip part of the retaining ring 81 and the fitting part 19 in a manner ~~contacting~~ being in contact with the end face of the fixing nut 82. This contacting is realized such that a predetermined contacting state should be achieved after the tightening of the fixing nut 82 at the stage of assembling. Thus, the loosening of the fixing nut 82 that could arise as time elapses is alleviated by the insertion of the escape stopping ring 85.